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Non-Dominant Varieties of Pluricentric Languages. Getting the Picture

In Memory of Michael Clyne

In Collaboration with Catrin Norrby, Leo Kretzenbacher, Carla Amorós

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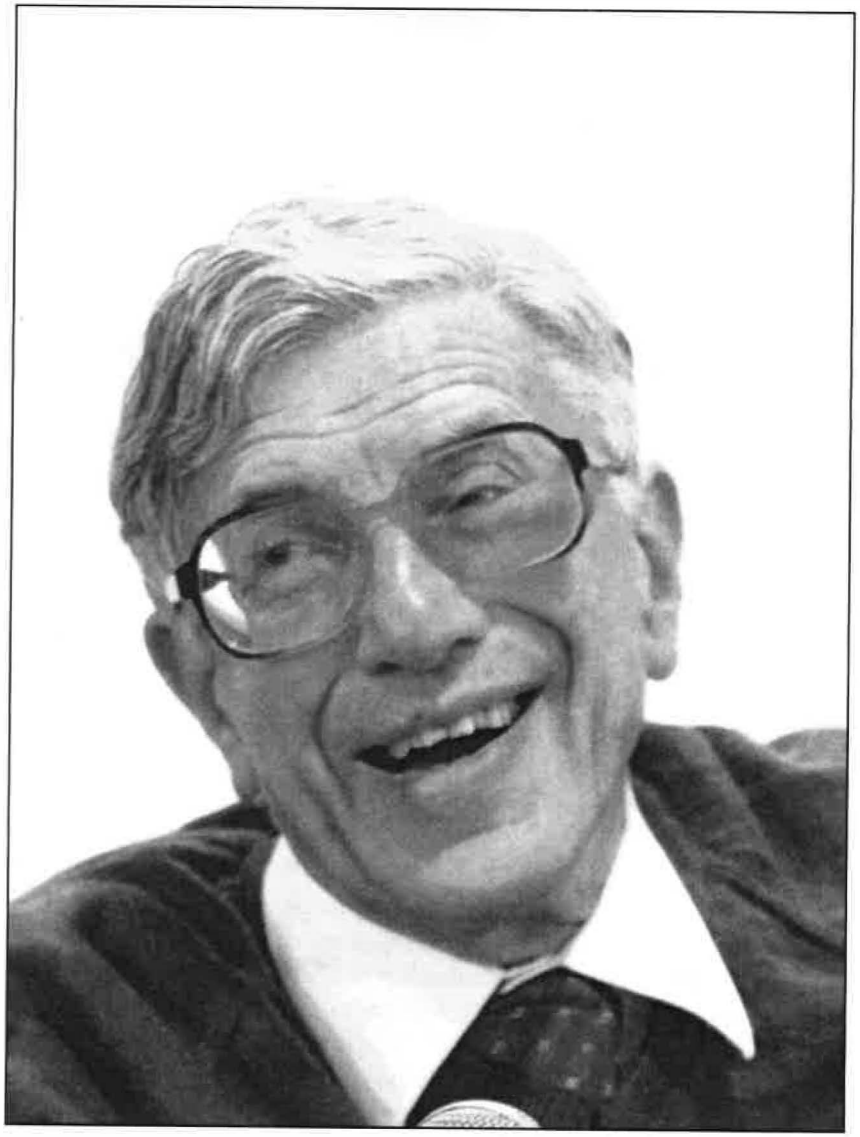

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AlineBAZENGA
(Universidade da Madeira, Portugal)
aline@uma.pt

Variation in subject-verb agreement in an insular variety of European Portuguese

Abstract

This paper examines the subject-verb agreement variation in one of the varieties of European Portuguese, taking into account previous proposals/accounts for other varieties of Portuguese, in order to gain a better understanding of the factors influencing grammatical patterns in varieties of Portuguese. The present study focuses on the verbal agreement in the third person plural (or 3PL), using data from a corpus of sociolinguistics interviews recorded in 2010 with 21 residents of Funchal, the capital of Madeira Island, Portugal. These results provide more data for the discussíons about the variable subject-verb agreement ín the varieties of Portuguese (African, Brazílian and European Portuguese varieties) and contribute to sketch a *continuum* of such varieties in the Lusophone space.

1. Introduction

This paper is structured as follows. First, a brief overview of the historical development of Portuguese in Madeira will be given, and the sociolinguistic conditions that led to the emergence of the insular dialect characterizing the present linguistíc situation in Madeira will be presented. Then, a overview of previous variationist researches on subject-verb agreement in 3PL in different varieties of Portuguese and the most frequent patterns of subject-verb agreement in EP will be given. After that, a description of the data and methodology applied in the study is given and the most significant quantitative results will be presented. The results will be analyzed by comparing them to the results obtained from a similar study focusing on other varieties ofEP and BP.

Portuguese is a *pluricentric* language (Clyne, 1992, Baxter, 1992), spoken in severa! countries. The two main standards are the European Portuguese (henceforth EP) and Brazilian Portuguese (BP). EP is used as the norm of reference for

African and Asian Lusophone spaces, in recent postcolonial countries such as Angola, the Cape Verde Islands, East Timor, Guinea-Bissau, Macau, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe Islands, all multilingual, and in which the Portuguese is the official language. There are, in addition to the standard EP, which is based on two varieties (Coimbra and Lisbon, the capital), a number of regional varieties of spoken Portuguese, within and outside of continental Portugal. Regional varieties of EP share many features, in terms of vocabulary and grammatical forms, with the standard EP. However, they differ in pronunciation, and they also display some grammatical forms and some lexical items which are specific to the region where they are spoken. Cintra (1971) and Segura & Saramago (2001) have proposed a classification, based on phonetics features, and they consider three main regional dialects: Northern dialects, Central Southern varieties located on mainland Portugal, and Insular varieties (Azares and Madeira).

In Brazil, the standard BP for written language coexists with a range of vernacular BP spoken varieties, indigenous languages of Amerindian communities, and other European and Asian spoken languages by small communities of descendants of European and Japanese immigrants.

EP and BP varieties are distinguished both at the phonological level in their vowels and consonant systems. At the morphosyntactic level, among the various differences, it may be referring to the use of *ter* ('to have') with the meaníng of 'there to be' in existential constructions in BP, instead of *haver* in EP (as in 'there are two books': *Tem dois livros na mesa,* in BP and *Há dois livros na mesa,* in EP). The rules for pronominal clitics placement of object pronouns also differ in both varieties. In BP we observe a tendency to preverbal object clitic placement (or proclitic position) in the contexts in which enclitic pronouns (or postverbal placement) occur in EP (as, in 'Ana saw me': *A Ana me* viu (BP) and *A Ana* viu-me (EP)).

A lot of research has been dane for BP varieties in the variationist sociolinguistic framework since the early 80's (Paiva & Scherre, 1999), on severa! linguistic variable phenomena; among them, the subject-verb number agreement has the status of a variable rule. Most of EP varieties research has been conducted in the dialectology field, corpora based on rural and illiterate speakers, focusing on the non-standard grammar of regional vernacular, and as affirmed by Naro & Scherre (2000: 241) "much work remains to be dane in order to determine the geographical and structural dimensions of variable concord agreement in present day-Portugal".

Variable subject-verb agreement variable has not received much attention, in terms of sociolinguistic research, until the project of *Study of Concordance Patterns in African, Brazilian and European Varieties of Portuguese.* Our study, integrated in this project aims to provide a preliminary variationist investigation in a EP variety, by examining the factors conditioníng the use of the non-standard variant, corresponding to a (non)-agreement strategy, and to enrich the patterns of variants sketched until now.

The variable under study concerns the alternation between explicit third person plural verbal forms (3PL) as the required verbal forms in the case of subject-verb agreement in 3PL and the verbal forms devoid of plural marking, the non-standard 3SG verb forms in use. The results of the quantitative analysis are compared with some similar studies for EP and BP. The main research questions addressed in this study are:

(1) Do the uses of this variable in Madeirian spoken variety of EP contribute for a better knowledge of the spoken variation in EP area?

(2) When comparing with some varieties ofBP, does the result allow drawing a sociolinguistic continuum between both main varieties of Portuguese, against the general belief that BP and EP are radically divergent[1]?

2. The linguistic situation of Madeira Island

Madeira was discovered in 1419 by Portuguese sailors in the service of Prince Henry the Navigator. The first settlers arrived in the early fifteenth century (1420 or 1425). According to Albuquerque & Vieira (1987) they carne from North and South of Portugal, and the variety of spoken Portuguese on the island exhibits features from both peninsular EP dialects (Northern dialects, Central Southern dialects).

The Madeirian society can be seen as the result of migratory processes. Since the early stages of its history, Madeira has been a center of the continuous flow of migrations resulting in different situations of language contact. The immigration flows has been regulated by economic cycles: foreign European residents, (the trade of sugar, and the presence of Genovese, Flemish and French traders, in early sixteenth century, and British[2], since the early seventeenth cen-

1 For further description of the competing point of views conceming the relatlonships between EP and BP vernaculars, and historical data of non-agreelng verb forms in EP, see Naro & Scherre (2000).

2 The British colony In Madeira, which developed as early as the fifteenth century and lncreased signtficantly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as being the most prominent group of people of Madeira. The *Elucidário Madeirense,* publlshed In 1921,

tury as merchants of wine, followed by Germans and Syrians, as promoters of the embroidery trade), and the presence of slaves from the Canary Islands and Gulf of Guinea, between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tourism activity started the late seventeenth century, bringing foreign temporary residents to the island, and has grown ever since. ln the twentieth century, we observe some return movement of Portuguese from the ex-colonies in Africa (in 1975), and recently, Portuguese emigrants from Venezuela and South Africa, on one hand, and the arrival of immigrant workers from Eastern Europe, Brazil, and PALOP *(Países Africanos de* Língua *Oficial* Portuguesa)[3], on other hand.

At the sarne time, a high level of social mobility is one of the main characteristics of the Madeira island society. Overseas emigration started early on, first in the direction of the new spaces discovered, in a colonization context (Brazil and United States) and in the twentieth century to different European countries, as well as South Africa and Venezuela. The effects of the language(s) contact situation on this space have not been yet investigated.

Among pan-regional varieties, those belonging to the Insular dialects, such as the spoken Portuguese in the Azores and Madeira, are less understandable for Portuguese speakers of other varieties of EP, as revealed by Cabeleira (2006) in her study of the evaluation of *Attitudes and prejudices against the language dialect varieties.*

The dialect of Madeira is characterized by some notable phonetic features (Andrade, 1993; Segura, 2003):

- Diphtongation of stressed high vowels pronounced / **i** / and / u , / **i** / ['ej] ou [ij], as *navio* [nBv'Bju], [nBv'iju] and / u / [Bw], as lua [l'BwB], /
- palatalization of /1/ before [i] or (j] (aquilo: [Bk' Bifo])
- deletion of unstressed vowel / **i** /, and in context of consonantal sandhi;
- assimilation of the final fricative **-s** [i] [i], (j], when followed by a voiceless or voiced fricative at the initial position of the second word *(as* vacas: [Bj v'ak'BJ]).

Some non-standard syntactic properties have been revealed by recent studies on dialectology field, as the work done by Carrilho (2010), based on COR-DIAL-SIN *(Syntax-oriented* Corpus *of* Portuguese *Dialects*[4]*).* ln this study, non-

cited the Portuguese historian Dr. Azevedo who wrote in 1873: "Madeira is largely anglicized in race, costume, ownership of land, as well as in its trade and money; English (after Portuguese) is the language spoken most frequently [and] it is only national pride which contrives to keep us Portuguese".

3 African countries with Portuguese as official language.

4 See http://www.clul.ul.pt/en/research-teams/212-cordial-sin-syntax-oriented-corpus-of-portuguese-dialects.

standard constructions are in areal distribution, and they mainly occur in a restricted part of EP area. Is the case of *existential impersonal* constructions with *ter (to have),* only attested in Madeira dialect, *aspectual constructions involving the gerund form* of a main verb (found also in Azores and Central Southern dialects of EP), and constructions as *Pre-nominal possessives* without *article* (in Madeira but also attested in Azores but with less frequency). It may be noticed too that these constructions are ali attested instandard BP. Martins (2003, 2009) referred to the frequency of pronominal *a gente se* as a subject doubling construction and the grammar of clitics with characterized by a non-standard selection of pronominal forms (subject pronoun *ele,* 'he' employed as object pronoun) non-standard object pronouns placement, sharing some properties with BP variety. Related to these grammatical features, Martins (2003) pointed to the possibility of a Jack of the properties of the Nul!-Subject *Parameter,* making this variety closer to the BP.

The linguistic situation of Madeira could be described as a regional spoken Portuguese, in which the 'geographical isolation' factor may be seen as a type of *language island* (Kiehl, 2010: 334), defined, in general terms,

> "as a form of spatial isolation from the linguistic motherland which entails a *discontínuous language space* [and] "the socio-psychologic-al disposition of language island commwifües or, in other words, their collective 'awareness ofbeing different." (Mattheier, 1996:815)."

3. Previous research in Subject-Verb agreement variation in EP

The general assumption concerning subject-verb agreement in EP is that it is not to be considered as a variable rule as in BP varieties.

Typologically speaking, EP is characterized by a rich inflectional system of the verb in its standard variety. Verbs display agreement features in ali paradigms, and the subject-verb agreement is realized by a co-variation in a number feature of the verb which correspond to the main strategy, fixed as a standard rule. The standard view on subject-verb agreement in EP is that verbs normally agree in person and number with their respective subjects. According to this rule, a singular subject requires a singular verb, and a plural subject requires a plural verb form (Pattern 1), as in given example (1), taken from Peres & Móia (1996: 451), below:

PATIERN 1: Grammatical or morphologically based agreement

1a. Vieram-nOS[3PLJ à memória as declarações prestadas [PLJ
carne [3PL] - to us to the memory the [PL] declarations made [PL]
'we remembered the declarations that were made'

1b. *Veio-nos[3SG] à memória as declarações prestadas [PL]
carne [3SG] - to us to the memory the [PL] declarations made [PL]
we remembered the declarations that were made

ln (la) both subject and verb are plural, while in (lb) the subject is plural but the verb is not marked for plural and has singular form. However, the verbal system is not 100% regular and the ambiguity regarding first person and third person of the singular (i.e. lSG =3SG) is also present in 7/10 paradigms of regular verbs and 8/10 paradigms of irregular verbs and makes it possible to have an implicit subject-verb agreement, without explicit marks of plural in verb form (Mota & Vieira, 2008). Furthermore, in some linguistic contexts, speakers find it impossible to follow the high regulated pattern and they ignore the obligatory grammatical agreement of the standard. Beside the default pattern we have the following patterns, corresponding to highly frequent failures of grammatical based agreement in spoken EP for all social classes:

PATIERN 2: *Attraction* or *positionally based agreement,* in the presence of complex subjects, where the agreement is correlated with a part of the coordinated subject in post-verbal position, the initial element neighbor of the verb, as in examples (2), retrieved from Peres & Móia (1995: 449-450):

2a. Impressionam-me [3PL] o entusiasmo e dedicação destes jovens [Subj.PL]
impress [3PL] me the enthusiam and dedication of-these young kids
we remembered the declarations that were made

2b. Impressiona-me [3SG] o entusiasmo[SNSG]e dedicação destes jovens [Subj.PL]
impresses [3SGJ me the enthusiam and dedication of-these young kids
I'm impressed by the enthusiasm and dedication of these young kids'

PATIERN 3: *Default singulars* based agreement (Chambers, 2004, 2009) is related to types of verbs and constructions, as with *be,* in present tense, and *unaccusative* verbs. Such constructions are exceptional in that the controller of agreement is not the element in subject position but the post-verbal noun phrase, as in examples (3) and (4) respectively, from Mota & Vieira (2008: 870):

3a. a minha principal preocupação são [3PL] os incêndios [Subj.PL]
my main worry are [3PLJ the fires

3b. a minha principal preocupação é [3SGJ os incêndios [Subj.PLJ
my main worry is [3SGJ the fires
my main worry are the fires'

4a. hoje, começaram [3PLJ as aulas [Subj. PLJ
today began [3PLJ the classes

4b. hoje, começou [3SGJ as aulas [Subj.PLJ
today began [3SGJ the classes
today classes began'

PATIERN 4: *Semantically* or *notional* based agreement is found with subjects realized by collective names or quantifiers, as in examples (5) given by Peres & Móia (1995: 449-450):

5a. Vinte estudantes foram a exame. A maioria [SubjSGJ passou [3SGJ
twenty students did [3PLJ the exam. The majority passed [3SGJ

5b. Vinte estudantes foram a exame. A maioria [SubjSGJPassaramc3PLJ.
twenty students did [3PLJ the exam. The majority passed [3PLJ
Twenty students did the exam. Most of them passed'

Even if they are considered as errors, regarding the norm, the anti-grammatical agreement patterns listed above, present different degrees of acceptability. Among them, the 'default singulars' patterns are very frequently used by highly educated speakers.

Although, the study of EP variants of the subject-verb agreement based on regional speaking corpora seem to indicate high frequency of the default pattern, even in non-standard varieties (Mota & Vieira, 2008). Research based on written corpora conducted by Peres & Móia (1996) points to the occurrence of variation in some contexts, as the labeled pattern 'default singulars' and 'positional'. Costa (2001) and Costa & Figueiredo (2006) limit the field of variation to the contexts in which the subject is in post-verbal position and only in informal speaking situations. Based on dialectal corpora of Portuguese, Carrilho (2003), Varejão (2006) and Naro &Scherre (2007) not only confirm the relevance of the effect of the position of the subject in the lack of marking of plural number on the verb; they also refer to the type of verb and the distance of the subject constituent from the verb as the linguistic context favorers the uses of the absence of agreement.

The major linguistic factors affecting the subject-verb agreement variation mentioned in variationist research developed for BP varieties, as influential work of Scherre & Naro (1997) and Naro & Scherre (1993, 2007, among others publications) are listed below:

(1) Phonological and morphological constraints, labelled as *phonetic saliency hierarchy factor*, which means that verbs with less salient differences between singular and plural are correlated with non-agreement uses, and verbs with high phonetic salience are correlated with standard agreement. The less salient verb forms are zero forms, corresponding to the 3SG, resulting in the lack of 3PL morpheme.

(2) Syntactic constraints such as: subject position (pre-verbal and post-verbal position), the distance of the subject from the verb, the type of verb and verbal constructions.

We also have to consider the attested uses of non-standard variants of 3PL ending-verb forms in severa! paradigms of peninsular dialects of EP, referred in empírica! studies based on rural vernacular EP (Cardoso, Carrilho & Pereira, 2009) or for a sociolinguistic purpose (Mota & Vieira, 2008).

3. Subject-verb agreement in 3PL in spoken Portuguese in Funchal

3.1. Data and Methodology

The data analyzed (1217 tokens) was drawn from a sample of the Corpus-Funchal. The interviews were conducted by letting the speaker talk about some topics of their life and were asked follow-up questions. The goal was therefore to attempt to reduce the *Observer'Paradox* (Labov, 1972[5]) as much as possible. Each interview was 30 - 45 minutes long. The 16 informants are ali residents of the city of Funchal and were bom on Madeira Island. Hence the variety of EP investigated is the regional spoken Portuguese.

The quantitative analysis uses the variable rule approach, by using the GOLDVARB 2001 application (Robinson et ai, 2001), which calculates probabilities for the application of a given variable rule. We have selected nine factors groups, including social (such as sex, age, and levei of education of the informants) and linguistic factors referred (listed above). The *phonetic salience of the verb form* (corresponding to the contrast of 3SG/3PL verb forms) follow the *saliency hierarchy* in two leveis, as outlined in Naro (1981: 74) and *inflected verb form of 3PL* factor has

5 This concept is defined by Labov (1972: 209) as "the aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain these data by systematic observation".

been introduced to account the variability of 3PL verb forms. The whole factors selected for this study are summarized in Table 1:

Linguistic and social variables / factors	
Social factors	**Linguistic factors**
1. *Sex* Male Female *2.Age* A (18-35) B (36-55) C (56-75) 3. *Class /Education* 1. Primary School 2. High School 3. Graduate	4. *Subject-verb order* • SV • VS 5. *Tense of the verb form* • Present Tense • Past Perfect Tense • Future Tense 6. Type of the *Verb* Ser: to be Ter: to have Inaccusative verbs (existir: to exist - etc.) Others 7. *Phonetic saliency hierarchy of the verb form* Levei 1 *(come- comem* : eats - eat) Levei 2 *(faz - fazem* : makes - make) 8. *Semantics of the lexical subject* [+ hum] (-hum] 9. *inflected verb form of 3PL* Standard Non-standard

TABLE 1. Factor groups for GOLDVARB 2001 analysis

3.2 Results

Our general results show that standard subject-verb agreement is missing in 16% of ali cases. 84% of the required inflections of 3PL verb form corresponding to the pattern of grammatical agreement are realised. If the use of non-standard variant 3PL (3%) is also taken into account, the uses of the standard agreement decreases to 81%. The three strategies and the number of evidences found for each are listed below:

1. 3PL standard variants (= agreement): 975/1217

(6) *as pessoas* [SubjPLJ *tentam* [3PLJ *educar os* seus *filhos.* (HC2-503)
the people [SubjPLJ try [3PLJ to educate the their children
People try to educate children. I

2. 3PL non-standard variants (= agreement): 41/1217

(7) *quando os meus pais* [SubiPLJ *moravo* [3PLJ *na casa.* (MBI-2)
when the my parents [SubjPLJ lived [3PLJ in the house
when my parents lived at home'

3. 3SG non-standard variants (= non-agreement): 191/1217

(8) *estes quadros* [SubjPLJ *representa* [3SGJ *a vida antiga* (HCl-175)
these paintings [SubjPLJ represents [3 SGJ the life ancient
these paintings represent life in the past'

Results for the general distribution and the relative weight of each factor influencing the uses of the standard 3PL of agreement verbal forms are presented in Table 2.

	Standard 3PL (= agreement)	Rei. Weight	Tokens
Social class/ Levei of Education			
• 1. low	295 (76%)	0,637	387
• 3. high	433 (87%)	0,438	493
Phonetic saliency hierarchy			
• Levei 1	717 (83%)	0,576	856
• Levei 2	309 (85%)	0,327	361
Subject verb order			
• SV	547 (86%)	0,426	636
• VS	49 (40%)	0,823	122
Animacy of S			
• [+ hum]	275(81%)	0,504	337
• [- hum]	145 (61%)	0,713	237
Verb-type			
• *Inaccusative*	52 (70%)	0,654	74
• *Ser-* 'to be'	191(70%)	0,605	272
• *Ter-* 'to have'	89 (89%)	0,725	115

TABLE 2: Overall results: percentage of agreement marks and factor weights for each variable

Table 2 reports the rate of the relative weight of each factor (second column). As we can see, the *Goldvarb* calculated four statistically relevant variables (with relative weights that value more than 0,5%). Three of them are linguistic variables, ordered as follows: the post-position of the subject with a relative weight of 0,82; [-human] subjects with 0.71 of *rei. weight*, and the low salience of

singular/plural opposition in the verb forro, with 0,63 of relative weight. Only one social factor shows a signifkant independent effect on variation, namely the leve! of formal education of the speaker. Tbe variable "low edutàtion" has been rated 0.63 of *relative weight*.

The second set of results corresponds to the cross-factorial analysis, by combining two variables, selected from the four retained as relevant by the *Goldvarb* program.

Table 3 contains the resuJts of the cross-tabulation analysis using the first and the second lingufatic variables, in terms of *rei. weight*, respectively the VS *arder* and the *animacy of the* subject.

	Standard 3PL variant (= agreement)	Non-standard 3SG variant (= non-agreement)	Tokens
Animacy & VS			
• [-hum]	24(31%)	53 (69%)	77
• [+hum]	19 (51%)	18 (49%)	37

TABLE 3.Effect of Animacy of the subject and VS context in the use of agreement marks

The results in Table 3 show the relevance of the interaction of VS order and [-human] referents in favouring non-agreement in the sample analysed (69%). However, even with [+human] referents one can see a regular distribution, which highlights the importance of the subject order for the phenomenon under analysis.

The next correlation concerns the *post-position subject* (VS order) and the levei of education of the speakers, which appears as the only social factor detected by the first step of quantitative analysis. Results for this correlation are presented in Table 4.

	Standard 3PL variant (= agreement)	Non-standard 3SG variant (=non-agreement)	Tokens
Social class & VS			
1 Low	7 (15%)	41 (85%)	48
3 Upper	17 (37%)	29 (63%)	46

TABLE 4.Social Class factor and presence or absence of standard verbal in VS context

These results suggest that the non-standard use of the 3SG verbal form greatly increase with the lower levei of education of the speakers and shows a dose interrelation of the educational levei and a specific linguistic context, as VS

order. The most impressive rates concern the speakers with less education (level 1), with 85% of non-standard 3SG forms. Examples in (9) illustrate the use of non-standard 3SG variants for the three levels of education considered, with post-verbal positioned subject in *non-accusative* constructions:

9a. [Level 1/Primary School]
aconteceu [3SG] *casos engraçados* [SubjPL] (MCl-247)
happened$_{[}$*3SGJ cases* funny
funny cases happened

9b. [Level 2/High School]
quando chegava_[3SG] *os meus primos* [SubjPL] (MBl-13)
when arrived [3SG] *the my* cousins
when my cousins arrived

9c. [Level 3 / Graduate]
existe [3SG] *determinadas pessoas* [SubjPL] (MA3-807)
exists[3SG] *certain people*
certain people exist

The final results listed concern the non-standard agreement marks 3PL. These variants have been attested in other regional spoken varieties of EP, as referred before. In our sample, we found two types: the *-U* ending-verb form and *-EM* ending-verb form, as presented in attested examples (lo) and (11), respectively, followed by the standard 3PL verb forms:

10. U ([ii] /**[u]) ending-verb form (6 tokens)**
a. *quando os meus pais* [subjPL] *moravo* [3PL] (te *moravam* st.and.3PL) *na casa* (MBl-2
when my parents lived at home'
b. eleS[subjPL] vinho[3PL] (te vinhamstand.3PL) *brincar* (MBl-19)
they came to play'

11. EM **([ij]) ending-verb form (31tokens)**
a. não *preparem* [3PL] (te *preparam* stand.3PL) os *comeres* [subjPL] *é só cozer* (MC2-641)
não *preparem* [3PL] (te *preparam* stand.3PL) os *comeres* [subjPL] *é só cozer* (MC2-641)
b. *que eles* [subjPL] *gostem* [3PL] (te *gostam* st.and.3PL) muito *de beber* (MC2- 681)
they like to drink a lot

These variants of 3PL represent 3% of the data, as summarized in Table 5.

Non-standard variants	Informants					Tokens
	MBl	HAl	MCl	MC2		
EM ending-verbs						
Present Tense	6	1	1	1	18	35
Imperfect Past Tense	-	-	-	-	8	
U ending-verbs						
Imperfect Past Tense	6	-	-	-	-	6
Total						**41**

TABLE 5.Non-standard variants: -EM and -0 ending-verbs of 3PL

Table 5 shows a relative dissemination of non-standard variants of 3PL (= 3SG) over the urban community of speakers. Our sample contains 41 occurrences corresponding to five informants out of sixteen, in all intervals of age considered (A- 18-35 years, B- 35-56, and C- more than 56 years old), with a low level of education (3 informants) and with a level of education corresponding to high school level (2 informants).

3.3 Discussion

The inventory of all non-standard variants, including 3SG default forms characterized by the lack of final nasal segment as plural morpheme, may be analyzed by given the provisional description, listed below:

1. 3SG [-nasal] variant: a *phonological variant.* According to Mateus & Andrade (2000: 130) account for EP, "nasalízation is analyzed as the spreading of the feature [nasal] of a floating autosegment that anchors to a syllable constituent", and this property may result in a non phonetic realization of the verb form.

2. 3PL as -U: a *conservative variant,* corresponding to a historical nasal vowel (Past Perfect < lat. U), before the diphtongation, occurred in EP in the 16th century (Mota & Vieira, 2008: 110);

3. 3PL as -EM: as *conjugation regulariza.tion variant* of 3PL paradigms of the Present and Imperfect Past Tense. In this case, the resulting variant could be explained as a case of transferring the standard syncretism of lSG = 3SG to non-standard 3SG = 3PL, corresponding to I *conjugation regularization* process (Chambers, 2009), or levelling irregularities of the verb paradigms.

The analysis of the two non-standard variants of 3PL (- U and -EM ending verbal forms), when compared with vernacular variants attested on other dia-

lects of peninsular EP, show the same tendency. Table 6 contains the data for the three regional varieties.

	Corpus - PE1 (Rodrigues & Mota, 2008) Northern EP dialects	*Corpus BBAA* (Rodrigues & Mota, 2008) Central Southern EP dialects	*Corpus -Funchal* (Bazenga, 2010) Insular EP dialect
Standard 3PL variants	**Non-standard 3PL variants / Tokens**		
[ãw] Present tense (1 st conj.)	[ü] / 4 [u] / 1 [i] / 1	[ej] / 1	[ãj] / 27
[ãj] Present tense (2 nd, 3 m conj.)	[i] / 12 [i]~0 / 3		
[ãw] Past Imperfect Tense (1 st, 2"\ 3 m coni.)	[ü] / 4 [u] / 1 [ã] / 1		[ãj] / 8
[ãw] Past Perfect Tense (1 st, 2 nd, 3 d conj.)	[ü] / 5 [u] / 2	[i] / 45 [ej] / 35 [ãj] / 12 [e] / 33	[ü]"'[u] / 6

TABLE 6.Regional diffusion of non-standard variants of 3PL in EP

Both non-standard variants of 3PL found in our sample are also present in other dialects. However, their distribution and frequency are different. The variant -EM [ãj] which is attested (38 tokens in our sample) in two paradigms (Present Tense and Past Imperfect Tense), only occurs in the Past Perfect Tense, in Southern Central Dialects area *(Corpus BBAA).*

Historically, the presence of these ***conservative variants*** of 3PL on Funchal may be considered as 'immigrated forms', transferred there by the first settlers of Madeira in the 15th and 16th centuries, who came from North and South of mainland Portugal.

The results presented in the last section appear more significant, in the context of the linguistic variation in EP dialects, if we compare them with similar studies, based on EP data, ranged by social class, as shown in Tables 7 and 8, lower level of education and high level of education, corresponding to graduate speakers.

	Cordial-Sin-CLUL[6] (Varejão, 2006)	*Corpus PF- CLUL*[7] (Rubio & Gonçalves, 2010)	*Corpus - Funchal* (Bazenga, 2010)
Agreement standard 3PL)	91%	93%	76%
Non-agreement (= non-standard 35G)	9%	7%	24%

TABLE 7: Subject-verb agreement in 3PL on EP corpus based studies: Low level of Education

	Corpus- Lisboa" (Monguilhott, 2010)	*Corpus - CLUL* (Rubio & Gonçalves, 2010)	*Corpus - Funchal* (Bazenga, 2010)
Agreement (= standard 3PL)	91,95%	95%	87%
Non-agreement non-standard 35G	8,05%	5%	13%

TABLE 8: Subject-verb agreement in 3PL on EP corpus based studies: High level of Education

Observing the cross-compared data, it appears that the Funchal results are prominent for both cases (speakers with higher level of formal education and lower leveis of formal education). The spoken Portuguese of Funchal, regardless the speakers' level of education, shows higher frequency of non-agreement marks, suggesting some specificity in the context of the EP variety. This is even more significant, when considering some degree of asymmetry of the educational level of speakers under the three studies rated on Table 7. In our study, we are dealing with urban speakers with primary school education, which is not the case for the two other studies, based on rural speakers of Portuguese, being almost illiterate.

Considering the overall results of the variable agreement in 3PL in the Funchal variety, the 81% obtained for standard variant demonstrates that this variety is farther away from previous EP data (92% for Lisboa and Oeiras varieties (Monguilhott, 2010: 3) and 91% for popular varieties (Varejão, 2006: 135), and shows a relative proximity with some varieties of BP, as for example, the Florianópolis variety, in the south of Brazil, with 80,6% for the same variant, i.e an explicit mark of standard 3PL in the verb form, as reported by Monguilhot (2010: 3).

[6] Syntax-oriented Corpus of Portuguese Dialects, available in CLUL.
[7] Spoken corpus Português Fundamental, *available in CLUL*
[8] Spoken PE corpus, collected and recordered in the region of Lisbon by the author.

Our results suggest the possibility of drawing a continuum line between the two main varieties of the Portuguese language, in which Funchal dialect appears in a more central position, i.e. a certain distance from both mainland Portugal and Brazil, but sharing some features with both main varieties and linking them. This sketched view is consistent to the view ofNaro & Scherre (2000).

According to Berruto (2010: 235-6) "the arrangement of varieties in the language space constituting a language takes a form of contínua. The concept of contínuum implies an ordered set of elements arranged in such a way that between two adjacent entities of the set (in this case, language varieties) there are no sharp boundaries, but rather a gradual, fuzzy differentiation, each variety sharing some sociolinguistically marked features with adjacent varieties. The very notíon of a continuum in variational linguistics arose in geolinguistics, where the dialectal landscape is often viewed as a dialect continuum".[9]

Following the research strategies adopted in English varietíes and principles underlining the hypothesis of *vernacular universais* (Chambers, 2004, 2009), the *Línguistic Contínuum from Vernacular to the Standard* (Chambers, 2009), and the *Angloversals* (Szmrecsanyi & Kortmann, 2009), we should consider a new arrangement of the variants of subject-verb agreement in 3PL for Portuguese language.

Chambers defines *vernacular universais* as "a small number of phonological and grammatical processes [which] recur in vernaculars wherever they are spoken" (2004: 128), they occur not only in working-class and rural language but in all sorts of vernaculars, including child language, pidgins, creoles and interlanguage varieties (Chambers 2004: 128). These specific tendencies occur not only in vernacular of English but in vernacular of all languages. The term *angloversals* (but also, *francoversals,* etc.) should be understood as the features that tend to recur in vernacular varieties of a specific language (Szmrecsanyi & Kortmann, 2009). Considering subject-verb agreement variation in Portuguese language context, it seems that some variants, as non-standard 3SG[-nasal] verbal forms, corresponding to the *Singular Default* strategy for *unaccusative* verbs in VS order, is becoming a dominating variant and could be a good candidate to a *portoversal.*

ln contrast to the Chamber's hypothesis, Trudgill (2009a, 2009b) claimed, in

[9] The geographical dimension is only one of the dlmensions in the an:hitecture of a language. In arder to capture the complex nature of the latter, lt is usefull to consider polarized continua such as those suggested by creolistics (Rickford, 1987): In fact, each dimension of variation in a language space takes the form of a sum of intercrossing continua, one non polarized (the diatopic variation) and two polarized (the diastratic and diaphasic variation).

order to explain, in sociolinguistic terms, the developments that occur in low contact languages and dialects, and the fact that many linguistic changes involve both processes of contact-induced change and universal tendencies of various kinds, the low-contact/ high-contact parameter. This parameter also accounts the linguistíc variation phenomena in varieties of a language, extended to the opposition between L2/Ll varieties. According to this view, the variable agreement continua in Portuguese should consider different degrees of contact-induced change, in which Madeira Insular variety of EP could appear as low-contact dialect compared with some varieties of BP, characterized by a high-contact.

4. Summ.ary and concluding remarlcs on future research

Subject-verb number agreement in Portuguese has long been investigated since the early 80's in the variationist sociolinguistic framework, mainly focused on Brazilian Portuguese producing new insights of linguistic and social factors which constrain this variable rule (Naro, 1981, Scherre & Naro1997) anda better understanding of the sociolinguistics polarized situation of standard and non-standard varieties (Lucchesi, 2006). In European Portuguese, there is a general assumption that the subject-verb agreement rules are almost categorical in ali social and regional varieties (Costa, 2001; Costa & Figueiredo, 2006) and their variability has been considered exclusive of Brazilian Portuguese. Despite the fact that most of work on sociolinguistic field remains to be done, recent variationist comparative studies ofVarejão (2006), Monguilhott (2010) and Rubio & Gonçalves (2010), ali focused on both varieties of Portuguese, have confirmed this asymmetry and confirmed the relatively insignificant rate of non-agreement uses in European Portuguese.

Countering this trend, our variationist study, based on spoken data collected in Funchal, as part of the research project *Study of Concordance Patterns in African, Brazílian and uropean Varíeties of Portuguese*[10], shows the variability of the rules governing the subject-verb agreement in third person of plural in this urban variety of an Insular European Portuguese dialect. The rate of non-agreeing verb form obtained reduces the distance between both varietíes of Portuguese, and allows us to consider the linking of them, to provide a *continuum* flow of the variable under study.

[10] See: http ://www .clul. ui. pt/en/research-teams/215-study-of-concordance-patterns-in-african-brazilian-and-european-varieties-of-portuguese

For the spoken EP in Funchal, our research confirms the variability of subject-verb agreement in 3PL, the three patterns (1 to 3), and their variants (standard *grammatical* 3PL variant, non-standard and *phonological* 3SG [-nasal] variant, and *conservative* or historical non-standard 3PL variants). It also shows a higher percentage of non-standard 3SG variants when compared with EP data but, at the same time, relatively closed to some BP data. This percentage is increased under certain morpho-syntactic conditions, when the subject is post-posed to the verb, semantically characterized by a non-human feature and selected by *unaccusative* verbs.

Overall, the present study provides evidence for the fact that the linguistic variation in the subject-verb agreement in 3PL is caused by several factors. When compared with other varieties ofEP and BP, our results claim in favor of a *continuum* between both varieties and against the polarity between them, which is the additional issue of further research question proposed.

Therefore, besides varieties distance, we think that it may be possible to draw alignments of variants, each variable and variants being analyzed by three vectors: the *continuum* of sociolinguistic variation based on the social status of the speakers, a continuum geographical dimension of linguistic variation, and the *continuum* of the degree of language contact.

Future research should focus on the integration of available data available on Portuguese varieties in a typology of non-standard spoken variants, in a multidimensional and dynamic sociolinguistic way to explain linguistic variation and change, either in direction as Trudgill's program describes above, and following Chambers perspective, by tracing the *continuum* line from vernacular variants to standard variant across varieties of Portuguese language.

The research should include the *portoversals* as specific grammatical features of Portuguese language. At the same time, it seems to be necessary to include, in the case of subject-verb agreement *continuum,* other linguistic phenomena correlated, at the syntactic level (such as the Null *Subject* Parameter) and phono-morphological inflection verbal paradigms levels.

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Ana Raquel SIMÕES
(University of Aveiro, Portugal)
anaraquel@ua.pt

Sara SOUSA
(University of Aveiro, Portugal)
smms77@hotmail.com

Language teachers' practices, representations and knowlegde on intra-linguistic diversity: A case study in Portugal

Abstract

Considering the importance of language teachers as far as intra-linguistic diversity and language varieties are concerned, we developed a research project with Portuguese language (PL) teachers on that same topic. We inquired 7 Portuguese language teachers of a school by means of a semi-structured interview, in order to: characterize their linguistic profile; identify representations concerning languages and varieties of Portuguese languages, as well as of the norm; identify their knowledge about languages and PL in particular and collect data concerning their practices on intra-linguistic diversity. The interviews were subjected to a content analysis, where 3 main categories were created (knowledge, representations and practices concerning PL intra-linguistic diversity). The obtained results clearly demonstrate there are some challenges for teachers and for the school in general concerning the attitudes towards the varieties and the norm, not only inside the classrooms in the work developed with students, but also amongst colleagues and with researchers in terms of the dissemination and sharing of what is being done in the different domains.

1. Introduction

Considering the importance of understanding the knowledge, representations and practices of language teachers, in what intra-linguistic diversity and language varieties are concerned, we have developed an investigation project